

(b) The advertisement and approved plans and specifications shall be available to bidders a minimum of 3 weeks prior to opening of bids except that shorter periods may be approved by the Division Administrator in special cases when justified.

(c) The SHA shall obtain the approval of the Division Administrator prior to issuing any addenda which contain a major change to the approved plans or specifications during the advertising period. Minor addenda need not receive prior approval but should be identified by the SHA at the time of or prior to requesting FHWA concurrence in award. The SHA shall provide assurance that all bidders have received all issued addenda.

(d) Nondiscriminatory bidding procedures shall be afforded to all qualified bidders regardless of National, State or local boundaries and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap. If any provisions of State laws, specifications, regulations, or policies may operate in any manner contrary to Federal requirements, including title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to prevent submission of a bid, or prohibit consideration of a bid submitted by any responsible bidder appropriately qualified in accordance with § 635.110, such provisions shall not be applicable to Federal-aid projects. Where such nonapplicable provisions exist, notices of advertising, specifications, special provisions or other governing documents shall include a positive statement to advise prospective bidders of those provisions that are not applicable.

(e) No public agency shall be permitted to bid in competition or to enter into subcontracts with private contractors.

(f) The SHA shall include a noncollusion provision substantially as follows in the bidding documents:

Each bidder shall file a statement executed by, or on behalf of the person, firm, association, or corporation submitting the bid certifying that such person, firm, association, or corporation has not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion, or otherwise taken any action, in restraint of free competitive bidding in connection with the submitted bid. Failure to submit the executed statement as part of the bidding documents

will make the bid nonresponsive and not eligible for award consideration.

(1) The required form for the statement will be provided by the State to each prospective bidder.

(2) The statement shall either be in the form of an affidavit executed and sworn to by the bidder before a person who is authorized by the laws of the State to administer oaths or in the form of an unsworn declaration executed under penalty of perjury of the laws of the United States.

(g) The SHA shall include the lobbying certification requirement pursuant to 49 CFR part 20 and the requirements of 49 CFR part 29 regarding suspension and debarment certification in the bidding documents.

(h) The SHA shall clearly identify in the bidding documents those requirements which the bidder must assure are complied with to make the bid responsive. Failure to comply with these identified bidding requirements shall make the bid nonresponsive and not eligible for award consideration.

§ 635.113 Bid opening and bid tabulations.

(a) All bids received in accordance with the terms of the advertisement shall be publicly opened and announced either item by item or by total amount. If any bid received is not read aloud, the name of the bidder and the reason for not reading the bid aloud shall be publicly announced at the letting. Negotiation with contractors, during the period following the opening of bids and before the award of the contract shall not be permitted.

(b) The SHA shall prepare and forward tabulations of bids to the Division Administrator. These tabulations shall be certified by a responsible SHA official and shall show:

(1) Bid item details for at least the low three acceptable bids and

(2) The total amounts of all other acceptable bids.

§ 635.114 Award of contract and concurrence in award.

(a) Federal-aid contracts shall be awarded only on the basis of the lowest responsive bid submitted by a bidder meeting the criteria of responsibility as may have been established by the

SHA in accordance with § 635.110. Award shall be within the time established by the SHA and subject to the prior concurrence of the Division Administrator.

(b) The SHA shall formally request concurrence by the Division Administrator in the award of all Federal-aid contracts. Concurrence in award by the Division Administrator is a prerequisite to Federal participation in construction costs and is considered as authority to proceed with construction, unless specifically stated otherwise. Concurrence in award shall be formally approved and shall only be given after receipt and review of the tabulation of bids.

(c) Following the opening of bids, the SHA shall examine the unit bid prices of the apparent low bid for reasonable conformance with the engineer's estimated prices. A bid with extreme variations from the engineer's estimate, or where obvious unbalancing of unit prices has occurred, shall be thoroughly evaluated.

(d) Where obvious unbalanced bid items exist, the SHA's decision to award or reject a bid shall be supported by written justification. A bid found to be mathematically unbalanced, but not found to be materially unbalanced, may be awarded.

(e) When a low bid is determined to be both mathematically and materially unbalanced, the Division Administrator will take appropriate steps to protect the Federal interest. This action may be concurrence in a SHA decision not to award the contract. If, however, the SHA decides to proceed with the award and requests FHWA concurrence, the Division Administrator's action may range from nonconcurrence to concurrence with contingency conditions limiting Federal participation.

(f) If the SHA determines that the lowest bid is not responsive or the bidder is not responsible, it shall so notify and obtain the Division Administrator's concurrence before making an award to the next lowest bidder.

(g) If the SHA rejects or declines to read or consider a low bid on the grounds that it is not responsive because of noncompliance with a requirement which was not clearly identified in the bidding documents, it shall sub-

mit justification for its action. If such justification is not considered by the Division Administrator to be sufficient, concurrence will not be given to award to another bidder on the contract at the same letting.

(h) Any proposal by the SHA to reject all bids received for a Federal-aid contract shall be submitted to the Division Administrator for concurrence, accompanied by adequate justification.

(i) In the event the low bidder selected by the SHA for contract award forfeits the bid guarantee, the SHA may dispose of the amounts of such forfeited guarantees in accordance with its normal practices.

(j) A copy of the executed contract between the SHA and the construction contractor should be furnished to the Division Administrator as soon as practicable after execution.

§ 635.115 Agreement estimate.

(a) Following the award of contract, an agreement estimate based on the contract unit prices and estimated quantities shall be prepared by the SHA and submitted to the Division Administrator as soon as practicable for use in the preparation of the project agreement. The agreement estimate shall also include the actual or best estimated costs of any other items to be included in the project agreement.

(b) An agreement estimate shall be submitted by the SHA for each force account project (see 23 CFR part 635, subpart B) when the plans and specifications are submitted to the Division Administrator for approval. It shall normally be based on the estimated quantities and the unit prices agreed upon in advance between the SHA and the Division Administrator, whether the work is to be done by the SHA or by a local public agency. Such agreed unit prices shall constitute a commitment as the basis for Federal participation in the cost of the project. The unit prices shall be based upon the estimated actual cost of performing the work but shall in no case exceed unit prices currently being obtained by competitive bidding on comparable highway construction work in the same general locality. In special cases involving unusual circumstances, the